

Washington, D.C. - Today, Representative David Price (NC-04) urged his colleagues in the House to reject a GOP Leadership plan to hold disaster relief funding hostage to offsetting budget cuts. Rep. Price called for the House to instead vote on a Senate plan that shores up the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) and designates the funding as an emergency expense. The House rejected the bill put forward by GOP leaders on a 195-230 vote. Republican leaders choose to include FEMA funding in a continuing resolution to keep the government operating past September 30, raising the possibility of a government shutdown if the impasse between the House and Senate is not resolved.

See video of Rep. Price's remarks

"This is a radical departure from how both parties have treated emergency disaster relief funding, and it will undermine our economic recovery," Rep. Price said. "No wonder the American people are fed up with Congress. The majority is putting partisan ideology ahead of the dire needs of the American people by telling our communities they won't get relief until we wage yet another budget battle here in Congress."

In the wake of Hurricane Irene, Rep. Price, the top Democrat on the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee which funds FEMA, has repeatedly clashed with House Republican Leaders who still insist that additional disaster relief funding be offset by cuts to other government programs despite opposition from rank-and-file Republicans and Republican governors. The decision to hold disaster relief funding hostage to budget cuts breaks with years of disaster relief precedent. Disaster relief funding is almost always designated an emergency expense to get money to affected communities as quickly as possible.

Since late August, the looming budget shortfall has forced FEMA to postpone funding for all long-term recovery projects in order to respond to immediate needs. The policy has placed projects on hold in affected states including North Carolina, Louisiana, Florida, Iowa, North Dakota, Tennessee and Alabama.

HOUSE REJECTS GOP BUDGET PLAN AS PRICE CALLS FOR DISASTER RELIEF WITHOUT OFFSETS

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